

## Word Wall Guidelines

A word wall is a collection of high frequency words posted in the room by first letter. It provides students with quick and easy access to the correct spelling of words most frequently encountered in their writing. The following are some general guidelines to keep in mind when creating and utilizing a word wall.

- Make sure all students can see the words on the wall from where they are sitting. Teacher typed words using 140 pt. font are usually much larger and more easily visible than commercially available words.
- It is helpful to back words under each letter in different colors. This will help when referring to homophones such as there/their.
- Only post high frequency words on the word wall. Content area words should be placed on charts or other bulletin boards.
- Add no more than 5 words a week. These words should be selected from high frequency word lists or words frequently misspelled in student writing. The No Excuses Word List (K-2 lists combined) make up over 50% of printed English.
- Do not start the year with all of the words. This defeats the purpose of allowing children to gradually acquire the new words.
- You may want to stop adding new words around April. This will allow the students the rest of the year to internalize the previously taught words.
- Words that all students can *consistently* spell correctly may be removed from the word wall.
- Mark/star words that denote word family starters (ex. play).
- Give students a portable word wall to use throughout the day. This will particularly help those students who have difficulty copying from the board.
- Interact with the word wall on a regular basis. Make sure to incorporate visual, auditory and kinesthetic means of practicing the words. The following is some of the activities you might include:
  - See the words. If applicable, point out what is unusual or illogical about the way the word is spelled.
  - Say the words/Chant the words (snap, clap, wiggle, cheer, etc.).

- Write the words and check.
  - Games from Phonics They Use, such as Be a Mind Reader.
- Once the word is posted, hold students accountable for them in their daily writing efforts, not just during spelling instruction.